

Message Text

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14

ACTION SY-10

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 NEA-05 ADP-00 /023 W
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R 080930 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1600

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 5648

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ASEC, CB

SUBJ: ARMORED CAR PROGRAM

BEIRUT FOR RSS; HONG KONG FOR RSS/ RTC FROM RSO

REF: (A) STATE 108445 (NOTAL); (B) STATE 108449 (NOTAL)

1. APPRECIATE YOUR COMMENTS IN REFTELS AND THE RESULTS OF YOUR TESTS.
2. CERAMIC ARMOR USED FOR TESTING HERE WAS FOUND IN SEABEE WORKSHOP AND WAS NOT RPT NOT TAKEN FROM EAT CAR. YOUR ASSUMPTION IN PARA 2, REFTEL (A), IS CORRECT. WE WOULD APPRECIATE EXPLANATION OF WHY PENETRATION POSSIBLE FROM ONE SIDE BUT NOT THE OTHER.
3. RSO DOES NOT BELIEVE WE COULD EXPAND ON TESTS OUTLINED IN PARA 5, REFTEL (A), BUT WOULD BE INTERESTED IN CONDUCTING ADDITIONAL EXPERIMENTS WITH CERAMIC ARMOR AND THICKER SHEETS OF P- G. PLEASE SEND US MATERIAL ASAP.
4. REFERENCE PARA 4, REFTEL (A), OUR VIEW IS THAT THE APPEARANCE OF THE CAR IS OF LITTLE CONCERN COMPARED WITH THE SAFETY OF THE OCCUPANT. THE AMBASSADOR WOULD, OF COURSE, HOPE THAT THE INTERIOR OF THE CAR WOULD PRESENT A NEAT AND WELL FINISHED APPEARANCE, SUBSTANTIALLY SUPERIOR TO THAT OF THE CURRENT PLYMOUTH EAT VEHICLE.

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5. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CURRENT EAT VEHICLE WITH RESPECT TO HANDLING AND MANEUVERABILITY APPEAR ADEQUATE. THERE HAVE BEEN NO MAINTENANCE PROBLEMS, JUST ROUTINE SERVICING. IF, AS YOU SAY, CERAMIC IS EFFECTIVE AGAINST AK-47, WE THINK UNDERBODY, ENGINE COMPARTMENT, FIRE- WALL AREA, AND BODY SIDES TO INCLUDE REAR HEAD PANEL (REAR QUARTER PANEL) AND BACK SEAT SHOULD BE LINED WITH CERAMIC. P- G FOR WINDOW AREAS SHOULD PROBABLY BE 2 1/2" THICK, AS OUR TESTS WITH TWO SHEETS P- G (EACH SHEET 1 1/4" THICK) INDICATE ABILITY TO STOP AK-47 AND M-16 ROUNDS. NOTE THAT WE HAVE NOT TESTED P- G OF 2 1/2" THICKNESS; CHARACTERISTICS OF MATERIAL OF THAT THICKNESS MAY BE QUITE DIFFERENT THAN TWO SHEETS OF 1 1/4" THICKNESS.

6. REFTEL (B). SEABEE HAS SUCCESSFULLY INSTALLED P- G BEHIND WINDSHIELD OF FULL- SIZE FORD SEDANS AND STATION- WAGONS AND INTERMEDIATE- SIZE PLYMOUTH. HE BELIEVES CURVATURE OF WINDSHIELD SHOULD NOT POSE SIGNIFICANT PROBLEM. SEABEE PEFLEY SHOULD BE IN DEPT BY JULY AND AVAILABLE TO DISCUSS INSTALLATION TECHNIQUES. PICTURES OF TYPICAL INSTALLATION HAVE BEEN FORWARDED TO NSU. YOUR COMMENT THAT INSTALLATION OF P- G BEHIND WINDSHIELD MAKES CAR READILY DISCERNIBLE AS BEING ARMORED IS ACCURATE. HOWEVER, RETAINING BRACKETS AND P- G CUT- OUTS FOR INTERIOR DOOR LOCKS ALSO REVEAL FACT THAT CAR IS ARMORED. WE DO NOT FAVOR P- G INSTALLATION BETWEEN FRONT AND REAR SEATS FOR SEVERAL REASONS: DRIVER IS UNPROTECTED AND IF INJURED WOULD BE UNABLE TO MAKE ESCAPE; IF DRIVER RENDERED UNABLE DRIVE, CAR AND PASSENGER WOULD BE AT MERCY OF ASSAILANTS. FURTHERMORE, PANEL BETWEEN FRONT AND REAR INTERFERES WITH AIR- CONDITIONING (DRIVER FREEZES, PASSENGER SUFFOCATES), AND MAKES PASSENGER/ DRIVER COMMUNICATION DIFFICULT IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE, ESPECIALLY IN CRITICAL SITUATION.
WANK

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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